

Appl. No.: 10/814,820
Amendment dated May 19, 2006
Reply to Office Action of February 24, 2006

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace paragraph on page 1, lines 9-19, as follows:

The roll or column of tobacco used to fill the tobacco rod used in the manufacture of cigarettes may be cut from reconstituted tobacco sheet (such as, for example, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company so-called G-7 reconstituted tobacco sheet). Representative methods for making certain types of reconstituted tobacco sheet using papermaking-type processes are set forth, for example, in U.S. Pat. Nos. 3,847,164 to Mattina; 4,131,117 to Kite *et al.*; 4,182,349 to Selke; 4,308,877 to Mattina; 4,241,228 ~~4,341,228~~ to Keritsis; 4,421,126 to Gellatly; 4,706,692 to Gellatly; 4,941,484 to Clapp *et al.*; 4,963,774 ~~4,962,774~~ to Thomasson *et al.*; 4,987,906 to Young *et al.*; 5,056,537 to Brown *et al.*; 5,143,097 to Sohn *et al.*; 5,322,076 to Brinkley *et al.*; 5,325,887 ~~5,325,877~~ to Young *et al.*; 5,377,698 to Litzinger; 5,445,169 to Brinkley *et al.*; 5,501,237 to Young *et al.*; and 5,533,530 to Young *et al.*; which are incorporated herein by reference.

Please replace section on page 2, lines 8-10, as follows:

A two-shaft, complementary-blade arrangement has been described, for example, in U.S. Patent No. 4,449,540 to ~~Marshal~~ Marshall *et al.*, wherein a slitter-type machine is disclosed for cutting baled tobacco.

Please amend text and insert paragraph on page 4, lines 19-23, as follows:

Fig. 3 shows a cross-sectional view of a slitter device depicting blade wear and resulting misalignment of the blades that can be remedied by embodiments of the present invention; and

Fig. 4 shows cross-sectional view of a slitter device according to another embodiment of the present invention[.]; and

Fig. 5 shows an axial cross-section of a slitter device according to one embodiment of the present invention.

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Please replace paragraph on page 8, lines 2-8, as follows:

One skilled in the art will appreciate that the axial adjustment of the second cutting blade may be achieved using various types of collars and securing members. For example, as shown in Fig. 5, the collar 24 may comprise a non-contiguous ring having opposing portions defining an angular gap 51. The securing member 26 may further be configured to operably engage the portions of the ring 24, across the gap 51, wherein the securing member 26 is capable of reducing the gap 51 so as to provide a compression fit or other manner of a friction-type fit between the ring collar 24 and the second rotatable shaft 20.

Please replace section on page 8, lines 16-18, as follows:

As shown generally in Fig. 5, The the collar 24 is rotationally fixed with respect to the second rotatable shaft 22 by an axially-extending a radially-extending key 21 and corresponding keyway 23 extending between the collar 24 and the second rotatable shaft 20.